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In The Outlook for September 18, 1909, is an editorial comment on a recent paper by Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz, an engineer of some distinction, before the Convention of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, in which strong ground is taken in support of a thorough training in the Classics for students of engineering. The readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY will probably have opportunity before long to read Dr. Steinmetz's views in our own columns, but meanwhile some phases of The Outlook's comment may be touched upon.

Dr. Steinmetz attacks the study of the modern languages instead of the classics, saying they open to the student no new world, no field of thought appreciably different from our own; and I therefore consider them of practically no educational value. Their utilitarian value to the college student is negligible, as, due to the limited time, the absence of practice, and the large number of other more important subjects of study, very few college graduates retain even a rudiment of their knowledge of modern languages. . . . To the engineer particularly a knowledge of modern foreign languages offers no appreciable help in following the engineering progress of other countries.

The comment of The Outlook is as follows:

As to the first statement, the great army of men and women to whom French and German, Italian and Spanish have opened "new worlds", and even "fields of thought appreciably different from our own", will protest. As to the second statement, it is true that the utilitarian value of modern languages is negligible to too many college students; but this is because the languages are taught in an English-speaking atmosphere, a defect now being gradually remedied. Finally, a knowledge of foreign modern languages would seem to offer appreciable help to the engineer in his own profession, as many writings of foreign investigators still remain untranslated.

There seems to be here a confusion as to the value of a subject in a scheme of educational training and the value of the subject for what it contains quite apart from its relation to education. In our ordinary colleges only so much time can be given to language study. It is as true of the majority of engineers, no doubt, as it is true of the majority of college students in general, that when they leave college they are not prepared to make use of their attainments in any language in any practical way. Even those who have specialized in modern languages do not read these modern languages fluently as a rule, and if any new field of thought is to be opened up to them by work

in a foreign language, it must, in the vast majority of cases, come during their graduate study or even later. No one would deny that anyone who reads French fluently and has an appreciation of literature will gain a great deal of pleasure from the French literary masterpieces. The same is true of every other language, but literary pleasure is an entirely different thing from a new field of thought. It usually happens that an admirer of a foreign literature is not very well versed in his own. In fact, it is almost a truism that the amount of first class literature of one language is sufficient to occupy the complete attention of the individual.

I am at a loss, myself, to know what new worlds French and German, Italian and Spanish have opened to the great army of men and women. The tendency of modern civilization is towards uniformity and the difference between the thinking of one country and that of another is a difference of individual rather than of language. In the present condition of scientific study, as well as of other studies, full accounts of the work of foreign scholars is almost always available in our English periodicals long before it would be available to those who read the foreign language. In my own experience I have frequently found the results of a foreign publication before I could get the publication. In the matter of translations this does not, of course, apply, but translations are not at present the only means or even the chief means of communication. The specialist in any department of language will always have to know foreign languages, but there is a wide difference between the specialist and the regular worker.

What The Outlook means by saying "that the utilitarian value of modern languages is negligible to too many students . . . because the languages are taught in an English-speaking atmosphere", I do not understand. It is not atmosphere so much as the amount of time available that is the chief difficulty. The native teacher with the very best equipment frequently is much less successful as a teacher of American youth than one who is not born to the language. It is rather interesting that German is taught in most of our institutions by Americans—Americans trained in Germany, if you will, but nevertheless Americans—and in the case of French, where it is supposed the atmosphere is particularly essential and where more native teachers are em-

ployed than in any other subject, the results are in no wise satisfactory.

I leave out of consideration the whole question as to the value of modern languages from the disciplinary point of view as compared with the Classics. This subject has been adequately treated by Professor Bennett and others. There is, however, one phase which is noteworthy. Many teachers feel that Latin could be taught better if the child had a preliminary knowledge of French. I am not convinced that this is true, and am inclined to believe that the success of those who advocate it is their success and not the success of the system, but it has not really been tried sufficiently to form a judgment. G. L.

THE SCANSION OF VERGIL AND THE SCHOOLS

(Concluded from page 5)

The high school teacher, of course, will object that he has no time to do these things, that my words are simply once again the words of the visionary college teacher who does not understand the peculiar conditions that obtain in the high schools, or the burdens already imposed on the teacher there, or the demands already made on the time of the teacher in the class room work. The answer is easy. Let the student of Latin from the start be trained aright; let him be trained, as suggested above, in Latin words, pronunciation as well as form and meaning, and time will then be forthcoming for the teacher of Vergil in which to do the things demanded of him in this paper. The boy who knows 1,500 Latin words by the time he picks up his Vergil will find the reading of Vergil on the whole a far simpler task than the reading of Cicero and Caesar had been to him; syntactically Vergil is easier than Caesar or Cicero, and in point of subject matter certainly is interesting, if not markedly more entertaining. Such a boy's progress in the reading of Vergil would be rapid enough to leave time in plenty for the consideration of the metrical form. Further, the plan of requiring the student to analyze in writing a certain number of verses day by day for at least a part, if not the whole of his Vergil course, would add but little to the pupil's work of preparation and would take up *per se* no time from the class room work itself.

What of the rules of quantity? As already argued, right training in pronunciation, begun with the boy's first use of a Latin word and carried through every hour of his course, will bring the boy face to face with the scansion of Vergil with no problem of vowel quantity to deal with, except as now and again Vergil's reproduction of Greek phenomena of vowel quantity or rhythmical usage may introduce an element new to the lad's experience. For all other pupils common-sense methods should obtain. One should not attempt too much. Certain rules of quantity are fundamental, for example, those about the

quantity of final syllables and those about increment. These, together with the rules for 'position', will account for the larger part of all the syllables with which the student has to deal. Is the learning of these rules beyond the intelligence of the high school pupil?

In this connection I would again lay stress on a suggestion which I have made elsewhere, that much would be gained practically if in all our teaching of matters metrical we were to speak consistently of *syllables* as heavy or light and of *vowels* as long or short. Our present system applies precisely the same terms to two different things and is inevitably confusing¹. In the written analysis of verses the student can set the macron above the long vowel and underscore the syllable which is heavy, even though its vowel is short.

Something may be said concerning the oral reading of hexameter verse. One may admit that he is not prepared to state exactly what the Latin ictus was, that he has no clear understanding of how the Romans treated the coincidence or the non-coincidence of the ictus and the word-accent, that he does not know what the Romans did with the syllables we call elided syllables, that he gives to Latin verse as he reads it a stress accent rather than a quantitative treatment and yet not be wholly absurd in claiming that nevertheless Latin hexameters as he reads them still have rhythm.

If we view the matter in a purely practical way we shall admit, I think, that there are virtually no difficulties in verses in which there are no elisions. Verses like

Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem,
or

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso
quidve dolens regina deum tot volvere casus
insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
impulerit

or Horace C. 1. 5 *passim* may be said to read themselves. In this connection the teacher would find it very helpful, it seems to me, to introduce his pupils to the hexameter via Lucan (texts of Lucan can be got for a trifling sum) because elision is much less frequent in Lucan than in Vergil and Lucan's verse is therefore easier to read.

What shall we do with the elision? Some years ago I listened to a discussion of this matter which was wholly iconoclastic and destructive, nay, even despairing in character.

The speaker confessed that he had come wholly to doubt and despair concerning the metrical reading of Latin poetry; he declared that he knew next to nothing concerning the manner in which the Romans read Latin verse and that other teachers probably knew no more about it than he; from all this he

¹ The present system induces good scholars to print such abominations as *pātris!*